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SB SAT @ AMSAT $ANS-115.01
AMSAT-NA TO BUILD NEW COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITE

AMSAT NEWS SERVICE BULLETIN 115.01 FROM AMSAT HQ
SILVER SPRING, MD, APRIL 25, 2002
TO ALL RADIO AMATEURS
BID: $ANS-115.01

AMSAT-North America has started construction of a new low-earth-orbit (LOW) communications satellite. Although the satellite will be similar in mass and size to the original AMSAT MICROSAT design, it will incorporate all new, leading edge electronics and RF technology.

Robin Haighton, VE3FRH, AMSAT-NA President, discussed the new project at the organization's Board of Directors meeting held in Washington, DC, April 20-21, 2002. "I am very pleased that we are embarking on a brand new satellite project. I am particularly pleased that this new project will operate as an EZ Sat, as well as serving as a test bed for new and exciting technologies." he said.

Returning to the original pre-launch numbering system used in many of the earliest AMSAT-NA developed satellites, the new "bird" will be named AMSAT-OSCAR E (Echo) until launch. Plans call for the satellite to contain analog and digital VHF/UHF FM transponders similar to those carried on the UOSAT-OSCAR 14 and AMRAD-OSCAR 27 satellites currently in orbit. In addition, the new satellite will have the capability to host one or two other experimental payloads.

Continuing an approach used in past projects, AMSAT-NA has partnered with an outside contractor, SpaceQuest, Ltd. of Fairfax, Virginia, who will assist in building the satellite bus. AMSAT volunteers are responsible for the design, development, integration and testing of the various experimental payloads.

Dr. Tom Clark, W3IWI, AMSAT-NA BOD member and one of the "spark plugs" for the original MICROSAT project noted that, "The last major program that AMSAT-NA managed was the MICROSATS and this is a superb chance for us to update that legacy with all-new technology." He went on to note that, "We now have accumulated about 70 years of on-orbit experience with the MICROSAT design since our original flock were launched back in 1990, with several other satellites of that same basic design now on the drawing boards. The design is a true classic."

The spacecraft is now slated to be ready for launch in late 2003. A number of affordable launch opportunities are being actively explored.

AMSAT is very proud of its long tradition of excellence and the contributions it has made to the advancement of space communications, space education and the space sciences. AMSAT-OSCAR E will be a new vehicle for Amateur Radio to continue that quest for communications technologies for future generations.

[ANS thanks AMSAT-NA Vice President Keith Baker, KB1SF, for this information]

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